

DESCRIBE THAT STATE

BY: Doug Peachey
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Purpose: To broaden students' knowledge about all the 50 states.

Teaching level: 4 - 6

Geographic Standards:

#1 - How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective.

#4 - The physical and human characteristics of places.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will demonstrate the following thinking skills:

- Knowledge - Students will recall all 50 states, their characteristics/shapes, and locations.
- Synthesis - Students will combine their knowledge about states with their knowledge about parts of speech to create grammatically correct sentences that describe the characteristics of the states.

Materials required:

- Grammar text
- Sources for information about states' characteristics
- Maps of the United States

Procedures:

Opening - Create student interest in the activity by asking a question to challenge the students; Can we, as a class, name all 50 states? Can anyone name the states which border the Atlantic Ocean? the Pacific Ocean? or the Mississippi River? (add your own questions)

Development - At this point explain the directions for the activity. Get into groups of five. One person in each group writes ten states that he or she thinks are in the North. One student writes ten states that he or she thinks are in the South. The three remaining students do the same thing for East, West, and middle states. Next, each student will write a sentence that describes a physical characteristic of the state, and is an example of a part of speech. (i.e. Rhode Island is the smallest state. Predict noun. South Carolina is a coastal state. Adjective. Arizona is low in humidity. Prepositional phrase.)

Closing - Students in each group will share their list of ten sentences. Each group will then compile a list of all 50 states with their sentences. If there is any overlap, list each state only once. Use maps to locate any states that are missing. Add them to the list.

Evaluation:

Each group will check each others' sentences for grammatical and geographical characteristic accuracy. Students' grades will be pass/fail for participating and completing the assignment.

Extensions/adaptations:

Draw a large U.S. map and illustrate the various characteristics developed by the students. (i.e. California might include a drawing of a beach, an orange, the sun.) OR display a map of the United States showing only stark boundaries, and have the students their sentences on the map; ie., "Mississippi is on the Gulf".

References:

Grammar text; any source that provides information about states (i.e. The Geography Coloring Book, Wynn Kapit, Harper Collins Pub. 1991)